From: Brian B. Canin
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/9/01 2:04am
Subject: Microsoft....

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I am not a politician, nor a zealot but a computer professional, an entrepreneur, and a 1/3rd owner of a multi-million dollar software company.

I cannot comment on the fairness of the Microsoft anti-trust trial from a political point of view, or even a legal point of view. Especially as what is fair, ethical, or legal rarely sees the fair and correct remedy in our special interest only oriented political system. What I can say, for what it is worth, is that Microsoft has been an unfair, monopolistic, and terrible influence in the computer industry for over 20 years.

I have never directly competed with Microsoft, but have been manipulated and pushed around like all computer professionals by the Microsoft company. It is great that the government is finally addressing some of the monopolistic excesses which Microsoft has perpetrated, and it would truly be a crime of unfairness for the government not to have the backbone to not follow through and actually enforce the rule of law. Make the country proud, at least those in the industry who understand, and act with the courage of your convictions.

I have personally seen and been outraged at the following behaviors and actions. All of these are the actions of a competitor who enjoys the clout of a monopolist. In addition, these actions are not just monopolistic, they push envelope of how much abuse a company can achieve, all while tying our courts up and getting away with their grossly unfair actions with little or no penalties.

   1 ? Microsoft owns the languages, the operating system, and the most important applications. This triple monopoly is one of the worst of their offenses. They control the development of software, they only provide the hooks into their operating systems with these languages, and they fight tooth and nail to make sure that no other API ?s other than their own exist in any of their languages. If there were other competitive operating systems that had been allowed to exist to date, and they had some of the desktop market share, AND most importantly Microsoft did not have a vested interest in the Windows operating system above all else, then Visual Studio would support other OS?s and would not be the critical tool for OS squashing which it is.

a.   When you own the languages (Visual Studio) which support your operating systems only, you stifle all the work of all developers world wide. You are a fool in the current environment to develop for anything other than Windows (at least in desktop and user interface software). If you

take another course, you are fighting a company which has been operating as a monopoly for almost 20 years now, and you will lose.

b.   When you own the operating systems (Windows), you control the desktop. When you control the desktop, you control almost every user?s computer out there. Because they control the API?s and change them frequently (with NO notice to anyone outside of their trusted partners who collude with them) anyone in competition to Windows is squashed.

c.   When you own the applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), you keep them completely locked. For example ? Why does Microsoft not offer Word, Excel or PowerPoint for Linux? Or why did they not develop them for OS/2? Because then these ?killer apps? would cause those other OS?s to be useful.

Microsoft MUST be separated into 3 companys. OS, Languages, and Applications. Here is why:

        If a new company owned Languages (Visual Studio), they would be required to open it up to support other operation systems. This would have been the case all along if Microsoft was not in the Operation system business. Now you could develop for Linux with the same power that you develop for Windows.

        If a new company only owned the applications, of course they would move them over to Linux and other OS?s which would come along. Why would they not support all those other customers?

        If a new company owned the Operating systems, they would not have the power with the languages and apps to control the market.

2 ? Microsoft applications keep their data closed. You can import into Microsoft, but when you try to read an Office file into another program, it does not work. Why? Because Microsoft keeps their data secret. It may be your letter or spreadsheet, but for 20 years they only import, not export. This is arrogance of the first degree and could only be done by a monopolist.

3 ? Microsoft gave cheap pricing to hardware manufacturers as long as they paid for a license for EVERY computer they made. I am amazed at the absolute arrogance of this action. How more monopolistic could you be! Microsoft closed the door on even the possibility for another OS to make it. Imagine a company which made 1,000,000 computers. If they put Windows on all 1,000,000 they paid 20$ each. If they put Windows on 999,999 and Linux on 1 computer, they paid 100$ on each OS! This isn?t just criminal, it makes the US government look like people being paid to look the other way!

Even after they were censured for this, where were the punitive damages? What about giving up 3/4 of their revenue for the next 10 years to reverse this incredible abuse of power! What they got away with for years shows that any company which engages in this kind of behavior risks nothing at all.

4 ? Microsoft wants it all. There is almost not a single vertical market or slice of technology which Microsoft does not own, wants to own, or is controlling. If they can ?t steal your concept, they try to buy you out. If they can?t buy you out they underprice you. If you are in a market which they didn?t notice and they don?t have a presence in your market, they make an announcement that ?they have remarkable technology coming out in your market?. This causes all venture to dry up and flee because no one in their right mind would try to spend money in a market which Microsoft is going in to? Thus your excellent technology gets destroyed by Microsoft?s VAPORWARE! They now control your market with NO PRODUCT. This gives them all the time in the world to take their invisible product and turn it into something, usually at a much lower level of competence.

5 ? Microsoft has inferior technology. Microsoft is not known in the industry as a good technology company. For 20 years they pushed complete garbage on the public. Currently, their software is pretty good, and especially hard to knock out of the drivers seat?. But this is because they have had 20 years to get their act together. Mission number one at Microsoft is the destruction of everything of value around them. Their technology then fills the vacuum. It?s not hard to get your software working after 2 decades when you have destroyed the competition with everything BUT good technology. What Microsoft is, is a MARKETING company. Don?t get me wrong, I am high-tech salesperson and believe that marketing and business is the MOST important thing in this business. But don?t use marketing to destroy the competition, while you bring inferior software to market? This is monopolistic behavior. If each individual software system of Microsoft?s stood on their own, lets say each was owned by an independent company, these companies would not exist today?.. The software takes years and years to not crash, to work correctly ,etc. Microsoft Access version 1.0 was not even a product which ran?. But it killed the Borland purchase of DBASE, because it sold for $99.00 and the world was afraid to get behind the $495 working system! After destroying the competition with marketing and other monopolistic behavior, and a whole lot of years, it has become the mediocre software it is today.

In conclusion I would like to state the
following. It is very hard to get a layman
to understand how much the monopoly of
Microsoft has affected the world of
technology and how much their abuses have
hurt so many individuals and companies. The
cost to the consumer is even harder to
explain. We live in a Microsoft dominated
world. Innovation only exists in the vacuum
of markets which people are not afraid to
enter, and if they get too big, Microsoft
jumps in and destroys them.

Come on already?.. Take some action?. Fix
what has happened so far and let all the
companies of the world have a chance to
compete. Imagine the gains technology and
society could have made if Microsoft had been
broken up 10 years ago!

Brian B. Canin
4958 Concannon Court
San Diego, CA 92130
(858) 523-0375